

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes August, 8, 2006

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, August 8, 2006, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield, SC.

Members present

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present

John F. Byrd, County Attorney
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Director
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

Absences

Wayne Adams, County Administrator

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and Councilman Hudson gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

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Councilman Kitchens made the motion to accept the minutes of the July 11, 2006, Called Meeting of Council and the Minutes of the July 11th Regular Meeting of Council. Councilman Bright seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Reports

There were no comments concerning the reports.

Mr. Byrd (County Attorney) was asked by the chairman to read a letter of reply concerning EMS from the administrator to Dr. Hugh Morgan.

Mr. Byrd also read a letter from Judge William Keesley giving permission to print in the newspaper a previous letter received by council concerning the cleaning of his office computer.

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Public Hearing

A public hearing was held to receive written and/or oral comments on Ordinance No. 05-06-580, "An Ordinance to Adopt and Implement Values for Property Taxation Purposes Established by the County Assessor and the S. C. Department of Revenue Based Upon the December 31, 2005, Valuation Date for Property Tax Year 2006."

There were no comments, written or oral, from the public. Edgefield County Assessor Keisha Bryant stated that reassessment was going well and she felt sure the target date would be met (September 15th). Notices could be mailed on or before October 1st.

Ordinances

Councilman Hudson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve second reading of Ordinance No.05-06-580, "An Ordinance to Adopt and Implement Values for Property Taxation Purposes Established by the County Assessor and the S. C. Department of Revenue Based upon the December 31, 2005, Valuation Date for property Tax Year 2006." Motion carried unanimously.

First reading of Ordinance No. 06-06-581, "An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 05-06-579, The General Operating and Ancillary Budgets for FY 06-07, to Provide for Reassessment Revenues" was passed unanimously subsequent to a motion made by Councilman Kitchens and seconded by Councilman Bright. Councilman Hudson made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 581 as amended, seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Bright made a motion, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve Ordinance No. 06-07-582, "An Ordinance Authorizing Edgefield County, SC to Enter into a Lease/Purchase Transaction Relating to the Financing of An Ambulance and Related Equipment and Other Equipment Including But Not Limited to a Truck; Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of An Equipment Lease Purchase Agreement in An Amount Not to Exceed \$180,000; and Other Matters Relating Thereto." The motion carried unanimously.

No resolutions.

New Business

Hospital CEO

Tim Padgett, Chairman of the Edgefield County Hospital Board of Trustees, introduced the hospital's new CEO, Mr. Ray Price. Mr. Price was hired on July 10th. Tim thanked council for their cooperation and help in any matters the hospital has had and will have. Council has always been very cooperative and willing to assist the hospital. They understand the importance of the hospital to the community.

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Mr. Price thanked council and thanked the community for allowing him to serve as CEO.

Recreation appropriation/Town of Johnston

The Town of Johnston has requested its portion of the recreation funds appropriated for the two towns. The current year recreation budget contains \$15,000 for facilities cost-sharing with the towns participating in the countywide recreation program (Edgefield & Johnston). Motion was made by Councilman Dorn, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve \$7,500 to the Town of Johnston. Motion carried unanimously.

Re-zoning

Ms. Mary Grasty addressed council concerning the re-zoning of tax parcel number 137-00-00-012 (Eastview Road, Edgefield). Chairman Kneece explained to Ms. Grasty that he had studied the request and saw no problem with it but it would have to go before the Planning Commission for their review before coming to county council. The consensus of council was to refer this request to the Edgefield County Planning Commission.

Oakley Park / appropriation

Ms. Carolyn Piekiniak, President of the UDC, addressed council concerning the \$2,000 FY 2005-06 appropriation for Oakley Park. Council budgeted \$2,000 for Oakley Park in the previous year's budget (2005-06), but the organization did not receive the appropriation. Some of their requests were mailed to a non-current post office box address. Councilman Hudson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve the request for the 2005-06 funds to be paid from contingency. Motion carried unanimously.

John Rutland

John Rutland addressed council concerning the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Rutland feels that his area (Mt. Calvary Church Road, Johnston, is not getting proper service from the Sheriff's Department. He presented a petition and a letter to each councilman.

A break-in occurred at his home and within three to four days also a break-in at a migrant camp near his home. He stated nothing had been done, and the residents in that area felt it was very unfair for the Sheriff's Department to cover the Town of Johnston and not protect other areas. As of this meeting date, Mr. Rutland stated that the Sheriff's Department has not been in touch with him or the gentleman at the migrant camp. The break-ins took place over two months ago.

Roy Blackwell / actions of County Administrator / inactions of County Council

Mr. Blackwell thanked council for allowing him to address them. This council is well aware of the animosity that Mr. Adams has for me and over the last two years that animosity has grown toward my business, Edgefield Daily.com.

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In December of 1999, Mr. Adams authored an article that was printed in the local papers that offered inaccurate and bias comments towards myself. He signed that article Wayne Adams, EC Administrator. I addressed council on the matter and nothing was done to hold Mr. Adams responsible.

In June of 2005 two ordinances were inserted in a Special Called Meeting and they were stated to be zoning classifications to be used in future zoning – that was not true. The council voted unanimously to approve those ordinances on the explanation of Mr. Adams. Within days edgefielddaily.com broke the true intent of the ordinances to zone the entire county and never inform the people. As evidenced in the public notice Mr. Adams ran in the papers, he failed to mention the zoning as required. Mr. Adams cannot claim he did not understand or know the full extent of these two ordinances as he authored a three page letter to the EC Planning Commission stating the ordinances zoned the entire county on June 28, 2005, before the public notice was issued. Council properly killed the ordinances in the July 2005 meeting but again never held Mr. Adams responsible for his unethical attempt to zone the entire county or for not informing the council properly on the ordinances' content.

During this same time period, due to my coverage of the debacle, Mr. Adams personally and without the consent of council, banned edgefielddaily.com from being able to be accessed by county computers. Again, after my complaint, council removed the block but once again did not hold Mr. Adams accountable for his actions. Mr. Adams is in the process of trying to do the same again with the ridiculous demand of all of the department heads and elected officials to list every web site they need access to so all others can be banned. I have no idea the amount of man hours each employee, department heads and others are using to provide Mr. Adams' attempt.

In the July 11, 2006, meeting of council, Mr. Adams knowingly made false statements to council regarding a repeated episode involving him and the Probate Judge's computer. Again, nothing was done to hold Mr. Adams accountable. Most importantly, in Mr. Adams' recent articles he published in the local papers defaming edgefielddaily.com and myself. There is no question to whom Mr. Adams was speaking while offering his untruthful statements as they are in print and the fact that edgefielddaily.com is the only on-line publication in EC.

I wrote a letter to council on July 20, 2006, demanding a written apology from Mr. Adams and a retraction of the statements in the local press. I received neither. I might point out that the articles were signed Wayne Adams, EC Administrator. The separate articles were produced on the letterhead of the County Administrator and no doubt were written on the county computer and faxed from the county office.

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Again, gentlemen, I ask whether you intend to allow Mr. Adams to continue unabated in his constant personal attacks of those he dislikes from the use of his office which you are held completely responsible for. This council and all government bodies are required by law to address matters when you are made aware of them. As evidenced over the years the issues surrounding Mr. Adams and his actions have gone unaddressed and completely ignored. I ask you, will this be another such incident?

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to receive this as information. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman Kneece told Mr. Blackwell that Council will get back in touch with him.

No old business.

Guests

Mike Murphy

I appreciate you (council) giving me the opportunity to speak.

I was contacted by Mr. Bright and Mr. Kitchens a while back to clean up the probate computer. I am sure all of you are aware of that in that they asked me to give them a written report. Then Mr. Kitchens called me a few days later and asked me to read an article on the Edgefield Daily website, and it made me very angry.

The first amendment gives you the right to print any thing you want to print but the law says it has to be the truth. He did not bend the truth, he broke it. I want to set the record straight.

Basically, my analysis of that computer showed there was no malicious intent evident anywhere. Basically it showed that the anti-virus software had not been updated since Feb. 27, 2005. In that time, all of the viruses and level of infections on that computer can easily be explained by normal usage. Because of the state of affairs from the virus from spy-ware, it is very prevalent on the internet today. It could be gotten anywhere. There were some spy-ware programs, key-loggers, etc. on there but the ones that I found are the run of the mill – they are basically found everywhere. So I could not see anything that purported any malicious intent.

I just wanted to say that it is upsetting to me because most people today read something and they figure if it is in print it is automatically the truth – they don't question it, and they should. So, I think he has done an injustice to the people of Edgefield County in printing that. If he can honestly admit that he truly derived what he wrote in that story from reading my report, then he obviously failed reading comprehension in school. Needless to say it was upsetting to me, and I thank you for the opportunity.

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No executive session.

Claims approved as follows: (June payroll omitted from July minutes)

A. PAYROLL: 5/22/06 thru 6/4/06

Regular.....\$195,898.91

PAYROLL: 6/18/06 thru 6/15/06

Regular.....\$191,856.50

PAYROLL: 6/19/06 thru 7/2/06

Regular.....\$189,044.23

B. General Operating (for July).....\$1,012,166.22

There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting of Council will be held Tuesday, September 5, 2006.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council